THE VANITY AND IMPIETY OF Judicial Astrology

WHEREBY

Men Undertake to foretell **future Contingencies**, especially the particular Fates of Mankind, by the Knowledge of the Stars, *i. e.* the Conjunctions, Motions, Positions, and Influences of the Cœlestial Bodies on the Earthly.

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TO THE

Gentlemen, Merchants,

And other Inhabitants of

PORT-ROYAL

IN

Jamaica,

That Attended on my Miniſtry in the Meeting there.

AS the Apoſtle found the Men of *Athens* too ſuperſtitious, ſo did I the Iſland

of *Jamaica* too much addicted to Judicial Aſtrology: And ſeveral ſo fond of that fooliſh Art, as ſeldom to ſet out to Sea without conſulting their Oracle of a Star-gazing Aſtrologer for lucky Dayes, and happy Stars. And being well aſſured that there was nothing of what was pretended in that Art, ſo called, I was willing to undertake ſomething while I was with you for undeceiving the deluded, and repreſſing of that vain, prevailing Humour, of predicting by the Stars: For which end I ſearched the beſt Authors I could meet with

with in your illiterate World, and ſumm'd up in theſe few Papers the moſt convincing Arguments I could either find or think of, to make appear its Vanity and Iniquity.

I had thought firſt to Preach a Sermon or two upon the Subject; but judging it not ſo fit for the Pulpit, I left at my coming away a Written Copy of it, for any deſirous to ſee it, and now I ſend it you in Print: Not that your Society is any way chargeable with a good Opinion of this Impoſture, but to

enable the more Judicious to refute its Propugnators, as they meet with them.

Neither may I be ſo injurious to you, as to let this publick Occaſion paſs without the Teſtimony of my Thankfulneſs for all the Kindneſs and Reſpect you ſhewed me, together with your generous Bounty in beſtowing upon me. And if you had not been more wanting to your ſelves (I mean your Souls) than to me, we might have yet been happy together. But I will not make the Cauſes of our Parting more publick than

than I made them in my Valedictory Diſcourſe in the Congregation. I muſt needs acknowledge, the coſtly Kindneſs of many of you left me nothing to ask, but what was of higher concern than any thing you had of your ſelves to give. And if I ſhould conceal this Goodneſs, I might be found to Offend on the ſame ſcore with him that took the Mans one Ewe-lamb from him. And for the Bleſſing of Health I muſt needs commend your benign Climate, in which I enjoyed a greater meaſure thereof than ever I am like

to do in the *European* Regions. *Sed multa majora deſiderantur.* Now being perſwaded that even in your *Sardis* Chriſt hath a few Names, and that thô they dwell where Satans ſeat is, (perhaps as eminently as in any Place where Chriſt is Named) yet have not defiled their Garments with the Pollutions of the Place; to ſuch I ſay, Watch and Pray, hold faſt and Repent, abide in Chriſt, and Chriſt in you; and when you have ſecured well your own Souls, ſpare not to Sigh and Cry for Abominations done in the midſt of you, and

Weep

Weep over a periſhing World about you, lamenting daily what you cannot amend, and ſo ſhall you be kept from other Mens ſins.

And before I take leave, I begg one thing for you all, that the Lord of the Vineyard that ſent me to labour among you, may grant that the many Sermons I have Preached with you may never riſe up in Judgment againſt you at the great Day, but that the ſavour of the Knowledge of Chriſt you have had ſpread among you, may ſtill in its gracious effects abide upon you, encreaſing and bleſſing

bleſſing the Word yet with you, for bringing forth Fruit unto Eternal Life: So Prayeth

The hearty Well-wiſher

of all your Souls,

Fra. Crow.

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THE

THE VANITY AND IMPIETY OF *Judicial Aſtrology.*

PRetenders to this Aſtromantick Art, fortifie themſelves from *Gen.* 1. 14. *And let them be for ſigns and for ſeaſons:* As if the Stars were given for Signs, whereby Aſtrological Diviners might by their Obſer-

ſervation be able to know and foretell future Events of things.

Luther in loc. Makes them to be ſigns of Eclipſes and great Conjunctions of portentous things, whereby God intimates either his Wrath or Mercy to the World, as by Comets, or ſome unuſual Phoenomena.

Though they be for ſigns and ſeaſons, yet for no Prophets; neither are they infallible, but ordinary ſigns of the change of Weather, (*Mat.* 16. 2, 3.) and of a fit time to manure the ground, (*Gen.* 8. 22.) The ſeveral ſeaſons ſhall continually return, accordng to the time of the Year, meaſured by the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

Pareus in loc. giveth as good ſatisfaction as any I meet with, of the meaning of that place, and how the Stars are ſet for ſigns and ſeaſons, thus, "The Lord hath ſet them to be "Meaſures for numbering and diſtin-"guiſhing fleeting time into certain "parts; that one time may be called "pre-

"preſent, another paſt, and another "to come: That one time may be "called a Year, another a Quarter, "a Month, a Day, an Hour. With- "out this kind of numbering and di- "ſtinction by Cœleſtial Bodies, we "could not underſtand what Time is: "There would be no remembrance in "Man of things done, nor deliberati- "on of things to be done, no hope "of things to come, and ſcarcely a "thought of things preſent: But we "ſhould be like them who ſleep, who "neither know that they ſleep, nor "how long, becauſe they count not "the time: Or we ſhould be like In- "fants who know not their Motion, "Life, nor Age. *Vid. plura in loc.*

No Divine ſo much as *Origen*, (who followed *Plotinus*) hath helped them in this their pretended Art, refuted by *Baſil* in an accurate Diſcourſe on *Gen.* 1. 14. And by many other Authors, as *Aulus Gellius*, *Pererius*, *Picus Mirandula*, who wrote twelve Books againſt them very learned and accurate.

Auguſtine

Auguſtine likewiſe meets often with them in his Writings, eſpecially *l.* 14. *de Civitate Dei, dicit Dæmonem invenire Aſtronomiam.* He makes the Devil Maſter and Author of this Black Art. *Vide Ludov. Viv. in loc.* And in his 63 Sermon *de Tempore*, ſays, "The "Power of Stars is nothing, that the "advancement of humane Affairs ſhould "depend upon them: But all things "are diſpoſed of by the Will of the "great King. And in *Pſal.* 72. ſays, "'Tis an evil, impious Doctrine, that "the Wills of Men are ſubject to the "Stars. And in his 42 *Confeſſ.* ſaith, "Who fall into the deſire of curious "Magical Viſions, are accounted wor-"thy of being mocked.

THE

THE VANITY OF THIS ART.

1. THey know not the Stars; nay, not one of a thouſand; far leſs their Influences; what is the Nature of the Heavens, Order of the Orbs, number of the Stars, variety of their Power and Influence. The greateſt Philoſophers have profeſſed their Ignorance of theſe things, even their Prince *Ariſtotle*, l. 2. *de Cœlo.* Alas, how far ſhort are the moſt learned of underſtanding the preſent things of Creatures here below, as Stones, Plants, and Animals that are juſt before us, and

and lye expoſed to our Senſes daily: How much leſs can be known of thoſe excellent Bodies above us, at ſuch a diſtance; as the Book of *Wiſdom* (in *Apocrypha*) teacheth us, Ch. 9. v. 16. *And hardly do we gueſs at things that are upon Earth, and with labour do we find things that are before us; but the things that are in Heaven who hath ſearched out?* Nay, out of Canonical Scripture Humane Knowledge of this is denied, *Job* 38. 33. *Knoweſt thou the Ordinances of Heaven? canſt thou ſet the Dominion thereof in the Earth?* Even where the Influences of theſe Heavenly Conſtellations, is plainly aſſerted in the two foregoing Verſes; yet is our Knowledge hereof clearly denied as to their particular Influences.

2. If ſome Stars may have ſo favourable and benign an Influence, ſo may others, for any thing they know, have as inauſpicious an Effect at the ſame time.

3. There can be no Certainty in their Art, becauſe of the ſwift Motion

on of the Heavens, that ſo ſuddenly alters the Face thereof, that it is not the ſame one Moment. And then the wandring Stars, that they make moſt Judgment by, of Humane Fate, are ſo uncertain, that the ſame poſture, it may be returns not once in a hundred or a thouſand Years.

4. You ſhall ſee Twins conceived and born together, to be of as different Tempers, Spirits, Parts, and Lot in Life and Death as any: Inſtance *Jacob* and *Eſau*.

5. If there be a neceſſity and fatality upon Men, born under ſuch Stars and Poſition of the Heavens, proper and peculiar to themſelves; then how comes the Death of ſo many to be the ſame in time and manner, that are born and bred ſo different, as in Earthquakes, Fights, and Shipwracks.

6. Let any Man ſhew why theſe Heavenly Bodies being Univerſal Cauſes, ſhould not have the ſame effects

upon Brute Animals, as well as on Men: and if they fail in the leſſer, we may well ſuſpect them in the greater.

7. What is to be ſaid of *Jews* all the World over? Whatever Clymat or Regiment of Heavenly Bodies they are born in, yet have they the ſame ſolemn Obſervation of Sabbath and Circumciſion. And ſo Chriſtians ſcattered through the whole World, before they heard the Goſpel, in all Nations, were obedient to their Countrey Laws, and Cuſtoms; but when Chriſt was revealed in them, and turned quite to another Mind and Life, was it by ſome peculiar Star, that prevailed in the ſudden Univerſal change of Faith and Life all the World over?

8. It muſt needs be vain and uncertain, becauſe it ſo frequently fails. Theſe things, that they either ſay raſhly or cunningly, which prove true, bear not proportion of one to a hundred, of what they ſay falſe; wit-

witneſs Almanacks. Now all Science or Art, is of theſe things, that either always, or for moſt part fall out true, according to the Rules thereof: Wherefore *Luther* on *Gen.* 1. 14. ſays, Aſtrology can be no Science, becauſe it hath no Demonſtration, but uncertain Conjectures. Wherefore *Cicero* l. 2. *de Divinatione*, wonders how any ſhould believe the Soothſayers, who foretold generally ſuch Untruths to *Pompey*, *Craſſus* and *Cæſar*, that they ſhould all die in their Beds in a good Old Age, and in Honour. And *Cato* ſaid, he wondred how they that deceived the People ſo, could look on one another without laughing.

9. If they can by their Aſtrology tell of things that are loſt, why could not the *Chaldean* Aſtrologers tell the King his Dream that was loſt, *Daniel* 2.

10. If the ſame Stars (whereby they contend all Humane and Divine things are carried) produce various

Effects of Heat and Cold, Mild and Tempestuous Weather, in different Countries at the same time, why not also different Events of things, and business in these Countries.

11. If nothing be done by the Will of Man, and Conduct of Reason, but all things come to pass by the influence of the Stars, then little things as well as great are governed by them. And if they can by their Art do the greatest, why cannot they do the lesser, *viz.* tell who shall get the Game at Cards or Dice, as well as who shall have the Victory, *Cæsar* or *Pompey*, *Alexander* or *Darius*.

12. If the same Conjunction of the Stars returning, produce the same Effects, why see we not many *Socrates*'s, and *Plato's* brought forth, with the same Spirit, Form, manner of Life, and Death, and all things in the World falling out just as they did, under the same Position of the Heavens sometimes?

13. If

13. If there had been any Certainty in Aſtrological Predictions of Futurities, certainly the greateſt Philoſophers, and Wiſeſt Men would have embraced and practiſed it: But the greateſt Scholars have ſtill derided it, as *Socrates*, *Cicero*, *Cato*, *Ariſtotle*, *Plato*, *Pythagoras*, *Democritus*, and *Seneca*. We read of their long Journeys to *Perſia*, *Chaldea*, and *Egypt*, to learn Wiſdom and encreaſe Knowledge. Where they encreaſed their Skill in Mathematicks, Policy, and of worſhipping their Gods: But for the Divination of Aſtrology, either they learned none of it, or concealed it from the World, their Writings manifeſting nothing thereof.

14. If it had been indeed a true Art, and indeed uſefull, it had been leſs ingrateful to Wiſe States, and the beſt Governours: For theſe *Chaldean* Aſtrologers were baniſh'd *Rome*, not only in *Tiberius* and *Dioclesians* Time, but in *Conſtantines*, *Theodoſi-*

ans,

ans, and chiefly *Juſtinians*, not only as Vain, and void of all Truth, but as hurtful and peſtilent to Cities and Societies. And to this may be added the utter Averſion and Deteſtation all ſerious Chriſtians, and Lovers of Divine Truth have to it. It's to be obſerved, that Haters of neceſſary Truths, are moſt curious about knowing unneceſſary forbidden things. *Auguſtine* calls Aſtrologers *Veritatis Inimici*, Enemies of the Truth, *Tom.* 4. *c.* 742.

15. The Vanity and Vileneſs of this Art, appears by the little Advantage the greateſt Practitioners of it reap to themſelves; moſt of them being but poor, deſpicable, and utterly ignorant of their own Fate, and greateſt Concerns, many of them dying diſmally, without foreſeeing it: As *Balaam*, that Notorious Soothſayer, could not preſage the Evil that befell him in that wicked Expedition to *Balak*, to curſe *Iſrael*. *Qui ſibi nequam cui bonus.*

16. If

16. If Aſtrology be an Art or Science, why is it not ſtudied as the Liberal Sciences are? as freely and openly; but it goes into by-places, and hides it ſelf in ſecret Corners. And Pretenders to it are for the moſt ſhy of diſcourſing the Principles of it with Learned Perſons.

THE

THE IMPIETY OF Judicial ASTROLOGY.

THe Impiety as well as the Vanity of Judicial Aſtrology, may be made appear many ways:

1. In that it is by many made a Cloak for Witchcraft and Conſulting with the Devil: And no doubt ſome begin with no other Purpoſe, but uſeing the ſuppoſed Art; but finding it ſo fooliſh and unſatisfying, ſtay not there, but labour to eke out the ſcantneſs of their Underſtanding of the Stars with the Black Art of Hells help and Divi-

Divination. And it is often God's righteous Judgment on curious Wits, that ſet themſelves to the Study of things concealed and forbidden, to leave them unto ſinful, and yet unſatisfying ways of ending the Tragedy. *Auguſtine* in *Tom.* 5. c. 291. ſaith, *Aſtrologorum reſponſa ex malis eſſe Spiritibus.* The Anſwers Aſtrologers have, are of the Evil Spirits.

2. It's the Hereditary (and ſo the more dangerous) Diſeaſe of our firſt Parents, derived to us, to know more than we need, and to ſlight the needful revealed Points of Knowledge. *Deut.* 29. 29. *The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God; but thoſe things that are revealed belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the things of this Law.* Man by affecting Wiſdom out of God's way, (ſaith a Learned Perſon) got a crack in his Head, which hath continued above 5000 Years; and ever ſince our own Wiſdom and Knowledge hath perverted us. *Bernard* ſaith, it's better, *Apta quam alta ſapere.*

3. It's an ungrateful derogating from Scripture ſufficiency, of impar ting all things needful for Man t know; eſpecially having ſo great Prophet as Jeſus Chriſt, ſent from the Boſom of his Father with all th Counſels of Heaven; which greatl aggravates the Guilt of running int that Extravagancy of curious ſearch ing into concealed Trifles; nay, t take the Devil for our Teacher, whe the Tabernacle of God is with Men as appeareth clearly from *Deut.* 18 14, 15. *For theſe Nations hearkened t Obſervers of Times, and unto Diviners but as for thee, the Lord thy God hat not ſuffered thee ſo to do: The Lor thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Pro phet in the midſt of thee, of thy Bre thren like unto me; unto him ye ſha hearken*; which paſſage being inter preted of Chriſt, *Acts* 3. 22. From al which it's moſt clear, that hearken ing unto theſe Diviners, is oppoſe to our hearkening unto Chriſt: An having ſo excellent a Prophet raiſe up, excludes all Applications unt ſuc

such pretended Prophets, that the Heathens were seduced by, and devoted unto. You shall likewise see, *Isa.* 44. 25, 26. that the Word of the Lords Servants is put in opposition to the Lying Diviners: *That frustrateth the Tokens of the Liars, and maketh Diviners mad, — That confirmeth the word of his Servants.* And Sooth-saying in *Israel* is not only opposed to a walking by the Light of God's Word, but recorded as the Cause of his forsaking of them, *Isa.* 2. 5, 6. *O House of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy People, the House of Jacob, because they are soothsayers like the Philistines.*

4. It takes Men off from Divine Providence, attributing nothing to God, and all to Fate and Destiny: as if they would ease God of governing the World, and ascribe all to the Government of the Stars. *Gualther* in Zeph. 1. 5. saith, *Observent ista qui hodiè Astrologiam judiciariam profitentur*; subjecting Events to Stars

that belong to the Eternal Providence alone.

5. It taketh off from the Exercise of almost all Religious Duties and Performances: For if the Stars and Constellations put us under a necessity of believing such Events of Good or Evil, Life or Death, will such a Person call on God, and commend his Life to him? or will he praise under prosperous Gales? or impute any thing that falls cross to his sins, that God is hereby calling him to Account in Judgment, *Jer.* 10. 2. *Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not dismayed at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathen are dismayed at them*: Upon which, *Calvin* saith, this Divination of Judicial Astrology, extinguisheth all Godliness, in that it brings all Duties of Piety to nothing, as Prayer, Praise and Repentance, *&c.*

6. It takes away one of the Flowers of God's Crown, *viz.* to know things to come, even the most contingent, secret uncertainties, which are

are denyed to Man to know, as in *Eccl* 8. 7. *For he knoweth not that which ſhall be, for who can tell him when it ſhall be?* And Ch. 10. 14. again, ſaith the Wiſe Man. *A Man cannot tell what ſhall be; and what ſhall be after him who can tell?* yea, the knowledge of theſe ſecret things to come, is ſo inherent a Priviledge in the Crown of Heaven, that if any of the Heatheniſh gods can claim it, he is content they be owned for true Deities, *Iſa.* 41. 23. *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods.* Now Aſtrologers pretend to know a Mans Thoughts long before he can know them himſelf, which is proper to God alone, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. Pſal. 139. 2.

7. God ſets himſelf againſt ſuch, and glories in defeating and infatuating their Devices, making the Diviners mad, by making their preſumptuous Predictions falſe, *Iſa.* 44. 25. 47. 13.

8. When the Goſpel Converted

Aſtrologers, they penitently and openly diſclaimed their Art by burning their Books, *Act.* 19. 19. An excellent Pattern for ſuch unlucky Students, who would burn their Books of Magick, that they might not hurt others; and of their own accord did they bring them and burn them publickly, to teſtifie their ſincere Repentance to the World, that they had ſo dangerouſly deluded: And thô the Books were of great Price, (eſteemed to be worth 5000 Crowns) yet the Power of Grace and Truth prevailed over the Love of Money.

9. This Cœleſtial Fate and Power of the Stars either can be hindered, and ſo is uncertain, or not, and then takes away all Free-will in humane Actions, and involves into many abſurdities. *Firſt*, Arguing the Soul of Man to be material and mortal, that is ſo ſubject to created Bodies. *Secondly*, The Will of Man is hereby excuſed from doing evil by a fatal Neceſſity the Conjunction of the Planets layes on Men not to be avoided. *Thirdly*, It makes God the Author of Sin,

Sin, that ſets the Stars in ſuch Poſitions, and gives them ſuch Influence on Mens Actions that hath no Remedy or poſſible prevention on Mans part: Wherefore *Auguſtine* brings in an Aſtrologer lying againſt God thus: That Adultery was not committed by the Mans own Will, but *Venus*; and Murder not by Mans Will, but by *Mars*, that angry Planet; and that God did not do Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, but *Jupiter* the Planet.

10. And a laſt may be added from *Cicero*, that pretended Aſtrological Predictions for moſt part are evil, and ſo their Ignorance is much better than their Knowledge: And *Seneca de Aſtris*, ſays, Whether the Stars cauſe or ſignifie Events, what profiteth it to ſee what cannot be evited? *Luther* of the ſame, ſays, It is much better to be always in the Fear of God and Prayer, than to be tortured with the fear of future Events by lying Aſtrologers.

EPI.

EPILOGUE.

AND yet I would not make light of the ſuperiour Cœleſtial Bodies of theſe heavenly Phœnomena, ſo celebrated in Scripture, and ſo beneficial to the World; there being ſo much of God's Power and Wiſdom attributed to his great and wonderful work of making the Stars of Heaven.

The moſt profitable Study of the Stars I take to be,

1. A ſerious conſideration of their Magnitude; that ſo many Stars ſhould be more than an hundred times bigger than all the Earth: What a vaſt Body muſt the Heaven be wherein they all are, if one of them ſo far exceed the whole Earth? yea, What are the Heavens we ſee, to the Heaven that is unſeen, to which theſe are but a Pavement!

2. Let us conſider their multitude, which cannot be numbred more than the Sand of the Sea-ſhoar; yet God telleth their Number, *Pſal.* 147. 4.

3. Their

3. Their ſwiftneſs, that theſe mighty vaſt Bodies ſhould be carried every Day ſo long a Journey, and never tire or are weary.

4. The exact Order of their Motion; ſo great, ſo many, ſo different Motions, and yet never one to move out of their courſe: The Stars in their courſes or proper Paths or ranks are ſpoken of in *Judg.* 5. 20.

Now theſe things conſidered, what can we do leſs than adore the Divine Wiſdom and Power that made them, and with *Galen* compoſe Hymns of Praiſe to the Honour of the Creator! and eſpecially with *David* wonder at that Divine Goodneſs and Bounty that made ſuch great and glorious Orbs and Stars for the uſe of poor little mean Man — for having mentioned the Heavens and Stars, (*Pſal.* 8.) he breaks out with *What is Man?* O then what greater and more glorious Proviſions hath our God made for us above Moon and Stars!

Let not the pretended Maſters of ſuch an Art any more delude the World or themſelves, to think that we diſown or deny the Divine Philoſophy in Scripture,

ture, that asserts the Influence and efficacious Virtue of the Stars, in *Job* 38. 31. *The sweet Influences of Pleiades*, or the Constellation of the seven Stars; but only we deny Mans knowledge of their particular Influences to be such as that thereby he can predict the future Events of Mens Lives and Actions. And we further assert, that to subject unto the Influences of the Stars the things that depend upon Contingencies and the Will of Man, so as to make Predictious from them, is a meer Folly founded upon fond suppositions that have no Being in Nature, but are the Chymerical Fancies of addle-brain'd Astrologers: For if they cannot tell what Weather it will be every day, by all their Skill, who will believe them in other things.

And because the Lord foresaw Men would dote much upon second Causes, and venture to Prognosticate by the Heavens the Fates of Men and the fruitfulness of the Earth, therefore in his wise Providence made he the Earth fruitful in all its glory, before he put the Stars in the Heavens, that we might see that the

the Earths fruitfulneſs depends not ſo much on ſecond Cauſes (as many vainly ſuppoſe) as on Divine Benediction *Gen.* 1. 12. compared with *v.* 16.

And let me beſeech ſuch as theſe lines belong moſt unto, to read and conſider well that Paſſage in *Iſa.* 44. 24, 25. *I am the Lord that ſtretcheth out the Heavens alone, and that fruſtrateth the tokens of the Liars, and maketh the Diviners mad:* From which obſerve, *Firſt*, The Title *Jehovah* taketh to himſelf. *Secondly*, That the Lord ſeems to take ſpecial Delight to befool the Wiſdom of ſuch who would reſolve future Events by the Conjunction of Planets, as if they could ſpell the ſecret Providences of God out of the Book of the Creatures, an end whereunto he never appointed them. *Thirdly*, That the God of Truth brands theſe Diviners for Liars. And *Laſtly*, That ſuch as pretend to ſuch a kind of Wiſdom, may fear the Almighty may ſmite them with Madneſs; which God in his Mercy prevent, by turning them in time to the Wiſdom of the Juſt.

FINIS.

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